MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM



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ADVISORY – Important Information

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TO: All Epidemiologists, HETL, All Local Public Health Liaisons, All City and

County Health Departments, All Healthcare, Lab Facilities, County EMA

Directors, Maine Medical Association, Northern New England Poison Center, All

Public Health, EMS, All RRCs

FROM: Dr. Sheila Pinette, Maine CDC Director

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SUBJECT: Increase in Vibriosis – Maine, July-September 2012

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Increase in Vibriosis – Maine, July-September 2012

Background: Since July 1st 2012, ten infections with bacteria of the *Vibrio* genus (also called vibriosis) have been reported to Maine CDC; four in Maine residents and six in out of state residents. In 2011, only four cases were reported, all in Maine residents. The majority of vibriosis infections reported in Maine occur in the summer months. Seven of the ten vibriosis infections reported in Maine this year were laboratory-confirmed *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, one was *Vibrio fluvialis*, one was *Grimontia hollisae* (formerly *Vibrio hollisae*), and one is pending speciation. The median age of ill individuals is 70 years. All patients reported consuming some type of seafood during their exposure period. All cases are considered sporadic and not linked at this time. Multiple state agencies are involved in the investigation.

Individuals with immune-compromising conditions, liver disease, decreased gastric acidity, peptic ulcers and diabetes are more likely to become ill with vibriosis. Symptoms of vibriosis include watery diarrhea, abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, fever and headache. High fever, bloody stools and high white blood cell count may occur in *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* infections. Persons become symptomatic approximately 4-96 hours after exposure. Common exposures include consumption of raw oysters, clams or other seafood, and exposure of open cuts or wounds to salt water.

Many laboratories in the state do not routinely test for *Vibrio* species on stool cultures. Testing can be performed on stool, blood or wound cultures. All isolates of *Vibrio* species from clinical specimens must be sent to the state Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL) for confirmation.

Clinicians are encouraged to:

Order testing for *Vibrio* species for patients with compatible illness and history of the following during the 4-96 hours prior to the onset of illness:

- consumption of seafood, or
- exposure of open cuts or wounds to salt water.

Prevention:

- Thoroughly cook all meat, fish and shellfish
- Avoid exposing open wounds to warm seawater
- Avoid consuming raw seafood, especially if you have an immune-compromising condition
- Use separate cutting boards for raw meats, fish, shellfish and other food products
- Refrigerate meats, fish, shellfish and produce at appropriate temperatures (40°F for refrigerators and 0°F for freezers)
- Keep foods that will be eaten raw, such as fruits and vegetables, away from food products from animals.

For More Information:

General information on vibriosis:

- Maine CDC: http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/disease/vibrio.shtml
- Federal CDC: http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/divisions/dfbmd/diseases/vibriop/
- Federal CDC: http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/divisions/dfbmd/diseases/vibriov/
- FDA:

 $\underline{http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/FoodborneIllness/FoodborneIllnessFoodbornePathogensNaturalToxins/BadBugBook/default.htm}$